

Cause/effect paragraphs

Source: A. Oshima, A. Hogue: Longman Academic Writing Series
3:Paragraphs to Essay

What Paved the Way for Vélib's Success?

1 Vélib' has become the world's most successful bike sharing program since it was introduced in Paris in 2007. **2** There are three important causes for the success of Vélib'. **3** First, Paris leaders planned carefully to avoid missteps. **4** They analyzed where local residents and tourists were most likely to use bicycles. **5** Vélib' planners then selected convenient locations for bike stations near bus stops and subway entrances. **6** They also decided to have a distance of just 300 yards from one station to the next. **7** The short distance allows cyclists to pick up and return their bikes easily. **8** Second, the Paris government made Vélib' bikes affordable for riders with the cooperation of a large advertising company. **9** Because the company agreed to pay for the Vélib' bike stations and 20,000 bicycles in exchange for advertising space, a one-day pass costs just \$2.15. **10** With this prepaid ticket, cyclists can have an unlimited number of 30-minute rides. **11** Finally, Vélib' has been successful because of effective publicity. **12** The Paris leaders created an image of bicycles as a vehicle for the future rather than an outdated mode of transportation. **13** In a fashion capital, they convinced people that bikes are fashionable. **14** All in all, Vélib' has succeeded as a result of thorough planning, creative financing, and powerful marketing.

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Like the paragraphs you have learned about in previous chapters, cause / effect paragraphs should have a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and one or more concluding sentences. In addition, a good cause / effect paragraph focuses on why something happened (the causes) and what happened as a result (the effects).

In the writing model on page 149, the writer decided to focus on what caused the Vélib' bike sharing system to become so successful. Here is another paragraph about the same topic. It focuses on the effects of the bike sharing system on the cyclists. As you read it, notice how it is different from the earlier model about Vélib'.

The Effects of Bike Sharing in Paris

Vélib', the world's most successful bike sharing system, has had three beneficial effects on cyclists since it was first introduced in Paris in 2007. The most obvious benefit has been the increase in activity among local people of all ages. Riding a bike is an excellent form of exercise. It leads to better overall health and an improved sense of well-being. Users of Vélib' also report another positive effect of the bike sharing system. They say they experience more day-to-day enjoyment. Cyclists have a chance to spend more time outdoors. While biking to work, they can see Parisian architecture, art, parks, and street life. These are things that commuters rarely have time to notice when traveling by bus, subway, or car. Finally, bike riders in Paris praise Vélib' for its socializing effects. They say that Vélib' has created a bond between cyclists. Experienced users often help new ones learn the Vélib' system. They also greet one another and chat. Because the cyclists are not crowded into a bus or train with a lot of angry commuters, they feel more like socializing. In conclusion, Parisians hope that Vélib' will result in fewer cars and less pollution in the future, but for now they are enjoying the positive effects that the bike sharing program has already produced.

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CAUSE / EFFECT TRANSITION SIGNALS

In Chapter 4, you learned how to use transition signals to create coherent paragraphs. In coherent paragraphs, one sentence connects logically to the next, and the ideas flow smoothly. Here is a chart that shows some of the transition signals you can use to express cause and effect. It is followed by rules, explanations, and examples.

SIGNALS TO SHOW CAUSES			
Sentence Connectors	Coordinating Conjunctions	Subordinating Conjunctions	Others
	for	because since as	because of due to as a result of
SIGNALS TO SHOW EFFECTS			
Sentence Connectors	Coordinating Conjunctions	Subordinating Conjunctions	Others
Therefore, Thus, Consequently, As a result,	so		

Sentence Connectors

1. Words and phrases that are sentence connectors link one sentence to the sentence that comes before it.

I bring my lunch from home in a reusable container and eat with a fork that I can wash instead of a plastic one. **Consequently**, I add next to nothing to the trash cans at school.

2. Sentence connectors usually come at the beginning of the second sentence, but they can also appear in the middle or at the end of a sentence.

By reducing what I use, I have fewer items to recycle. **As a result**, sanitation trucks have fewer recyclables to transport.

By reducing what I use, I have fewer items to recycle. Sanitation trucks, **as a result**, have fewer recyclables to transport.

By reducing what I use, I have fewer items to recycle. Sanitation trucks have fewer recyclables to transport, **as a result**.